

Vissenberg is known for its stories about robbers. Some of them are just legends, although they do have a certain basis in fact. In the Middle Ages, people who had broken the laws of the land were declared outlaws. In the then vast and impassable areas of forestland around Vissenberg, the outlaws had a chance to hide. The main road across Funen described a wide arc round Vissenberg for many years, but if one was in a hurry, one took the risk of using the Vissenberg Gyde short cut. During the 18th century, considerable inroads were made into the forests and the following century saw the end of the age of the robbers. One of the legends goes as follows:

(From Danish Legends, 1843, I, p. 365 ff)



conservation area near Vissenbjerg offers many fine views and a dramatic landscape. Afrunden (The Abyss) was made the subject of a conservation order in 1949, with a larger area being added in 1979. The area has been declared one of national geological interest.

A number of regional bus routes meet in Vissensbjerg, and cycle route no. 79, which runs north-south, passes to the east of Vissensbjerg.

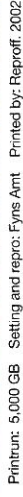
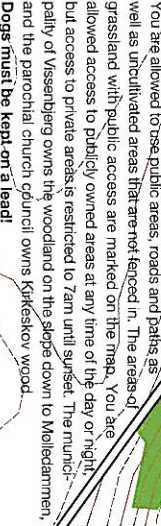


Photo of clay: Gunnar, Larsen Fyns Amt - Photo of Afgrunden: Birgit Bjerre Laursen, Fyns Amt

- ③ Impressive view to the south across Brænde Å river to the gravel hills of Brændholt Bjerg and Frøbjerg Bærehøj, which, at 131 metres, is the highest point on Funen. To the west, the view extends right to the Little Belt. The hill is a gravel hill (a on the geological drawing), so there is always free access to it.
- ④ Fuglevig Cooperative Dairy functioned from 1888 until the 1980s – it has since been converted to other uses.
- ⑤ Afrunden (The Abyss) is the name of the largest gorge created by the melt-water when the glacial lakes were suddenly emptied at the end of the last Ice Age. The gorge slices through the clay deposits (b) on the geological drawing), so it can be quite slippery here in wet weather.

- Paths -.-.-.- Marked nature trails



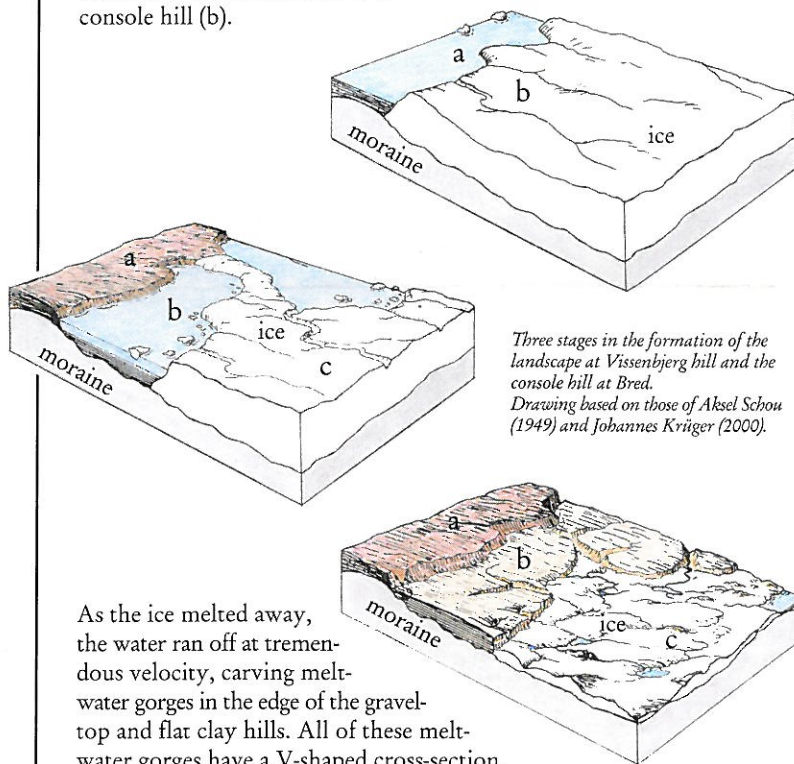
Round gravel hills and flat clay hills

When the main ice mass left Funen at the end of the last Ice Age, a large section was left behind – called dead ice – in the area around Vissenbjerg. The melting of the dead ice took place in three stages. The highest hills were formed on top of older moraine clay hills. Here the ice was thinnest, so the first lakes in the dead ice were formed here (a). There was plenty of gushing water that carried coarse material along with it. Gravel and sand were therefore deposited in the lakes. The hill which the town of Vissenbjerg lies on is a gravel top hill (a). Where the stadium now lies, gravel was excavated in the 1950s, as can clearly be seen if you follow the path westwards from Udsigten (The Viewpoint). During the next stage, the ice melted at a lower level, and the next lakes were formed in the ice here. The water now flowed at a slower rate, so now only fine particles of clay were brought down into the lakes and deposited. When the ice melted completely, the lakes remained as flat clay hills. Below Vissenbjerg hill near Bred, there is a flat clay hill that leans up against the gravel hill and is therefore referred to as a console hill (b).

Photo: Fyns Amt



Aerial photo seen from the west, with the town of Vissenbjerg on the high gravel hill and the flat clay hill below



Three stages in the formation of the landscape at Vissenbjerg hill and the console hill at Bred. Drawing based on those of Aksel Schou (1949) and Johannes Krüger (2000).

As the ice melted away, the water ran off at tremendous velocity, carving melt-water gorges in the edge of the gravel-top and flat clay hills. All of these melt-water gorges have a V-shaped cross-section. The most impressive of these is ⑤ Afgrunden, which is 16 metres deep and 400 metres long.

Below the hills (c), the landscape was influenced by the last sections of dead ice, resulting in gently rolling countryside. The many hollows became peat bogs.

St. Vitus' spring

The holy spring dedicated to St. Vitus is reputed to lie in the rectory garden, but since springs move and roads are altered, it is now thought to have its source at ②. At the spring, the white butterbur grows. Vitus is a Catholic saint who is said to have died a martyr around 300 AD. In the Middle Ages, he was invoked by people suffering from epilepsy and seizures – also known as St. Vitus' Dance. Cockerels were sacrificed to St. Vitus in the hope of relief from these afflictions. This is the origin of the cock in the town arms.

There are many springs at the foot of the slopes, including one that feeds Møllesøen lake and thereby the watercourse in Afgrunden. Fugleviglund – now Fuglevig Production High School – got tap water and flush toilets as early as 1900 using water from a spring.

A distinctive feature of springs is that the temperature of the water is usually 7-8°C all year round. So the springs are cold in summer, but warm in winter - in frosty weather they are even known to steam. It is said that when St. Vitus' spring 'smokes' or 'heats its oven', rain is on the way.

Small-leaved golden saxifrage loves the moist soil found close to woodland springs



Photo: Leif Bissop-Larsen, Fyns Amt



White butterbur

Typical of this very early flowering plant (March/April) is that it grows close to springs and elsewhere where the soil is moist, as along the banks of streams. The flowers are in small composite clusters, so the flower is one of the composites. On account of its large leaves, which grow during the course of the spring, the plant is often referred to as a 'dock'. White butterbur is indigenous to Denmark, unlike the red butterbur, which was introduced for its healing properties.

Photo: Birgit Birte Laursen, Fyns Amt

The history of the parish

In earlier times, the terrain was impassable. Probably for that reason, Vissenbjerg parish was slow in being settled – as the names of the villages attest to. The farms were scattered and part of subsistence derived from the forest. The sandy soil resulted in low yields. The same was true of the clayey soil until drainage was mastered. Unlike this area, farms in other parts of Funen lie close together in villages, with high yields coming from the fertile soil.

The farmers in the Vissenbjerg area were always free of squires, although some of the farms belonged to the church in the medieval period, becoming Crown land after the Reformation. In 1764, the king sold off his rights to the farms. Below the freeholders, a class of smallholders emerged who, in order to earn their daily bread, had to work as day labourers, craftsmen or do some other job alongside their main occupation. In 1806, there were 158 smallholders under the 116 freehold farms. The poor smallholders left their mark on the history of the parish throughout the 19th century, the change in the composition of the population not taking place until society became industrialised.

Fuglevig Rectory ① lay until 1837 at the foot of the hill near Fuglevig water mill (see map of 1816). The rectory burned down and was then moved to its present site next to the church (see map of 1890). Until then, the church had been on its own next to the inn and a few houses. Not until the main road had been regulated in 1805 did housing spring up alongside the road, gradually increasing, with Vissenbjerg being registered as a town in 1955.

Map of 1816

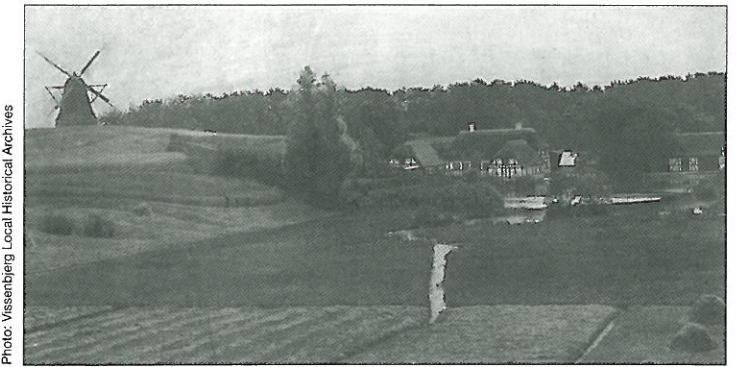
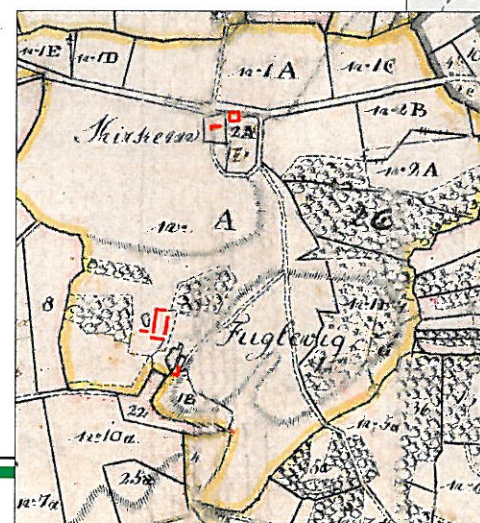
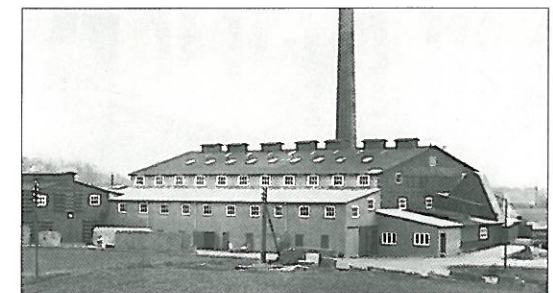


Photo: Vissenbjerg Local Historical Archives

Photo of Fuglevig windmill and water mill in the 1930s. Today, the millpond is a parking area and the meadow is Møllesøen lake

Fuglevig water mill

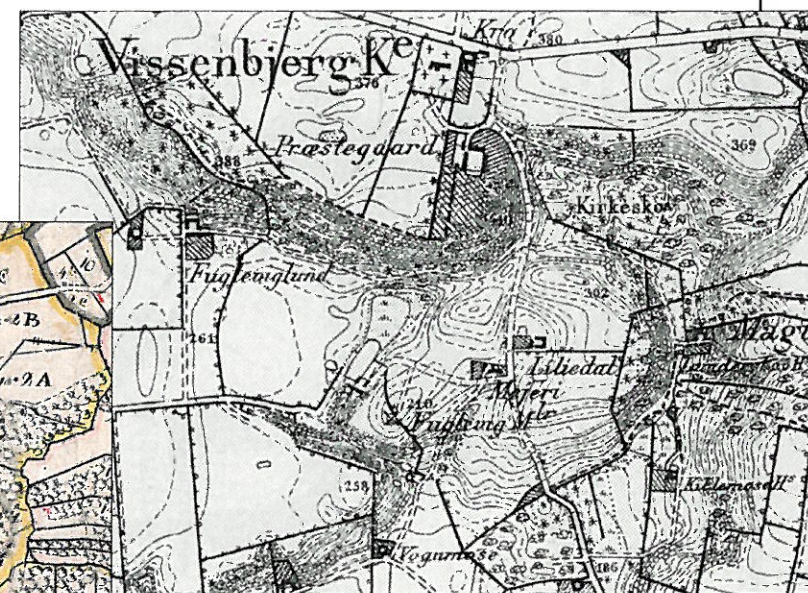
The first mention of a mill at Fuglevig is in 1589. There was also a mill driven by a small amount of water at the bottom of Afgrunden. Later, a windmill was built. The last Fuglevig water mill was built in 1847. Milling was discontinued in 1929, but the buildings were not demolished until 1949. The lifespan of the windmill is not known, but it is included in the map of 1890 (see below), and local people can recall that it was still there in the mid 1930s.



Lundegård brickworks was built around 1795 and closed around 1970. It lay west of Fuglevig Production High School. Photo c. 1956.

Brickworks

As early as the Middle Ages, the fine local clay was used by brickworks to make fired bricks. With the advent of industrialisation in the mid 19th century, the number and size of the brickworks increased. There were once 11 brickworks in the municipality of Vissenbjerg. None remain, but the clay is used by a Funen brickworks and by two producers of insulating material and planting soil, respectively. The flat clay hills have their top layers removed, as can be clearly seen from the present landscape ⑥.



Map of 1890